

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 STR-04 AGR-05 CIAE-00
COME-00 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 EPG-02 SP-02
TRSE-00 FRB-03 OMB-01 /055 W
-----140317Z 095247 /20

R 130808Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3552
INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL VANCOUVER

C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 2794

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: BEXP, TW
SUBJECT: MUSHROOMS

REF: STATE 100053

1. DEPARTMENT OFFICER JOEL SPIRO AND FRED HENNEKE OF
EMBASSY SEOUL MET ON MAY 10 WITH ROK MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICIALS JOO HO KIM, DIRECTOR OF THE ECONOMIC AND
MARKETING BUREAU, AND DONG TAE KIM, CHIEF OF THE EXPORT
DIVISION, AND EXPRESSED SERIOUS USG CONCERN OVER THE
EXCESSIVE SHIPMENTS OF KOREAN CANNED MUSHROOMS TO THE
UNITED STATES. GENERAL KIM, THE PRESIDENT OF THE KOREAN
CANNED GOODS EXPORT ASSOCIATION, WAS ALSO PRESENT.

2. SPIRO TOLD KOREAN OFFICIALS THAT AS OF MID-APRIL
ENTRIES OF KOREAN CANNED MUSHROOMS WERE 600,000 LBS. OVER
AGREED EXPORT LEVELS AND THAT THE USG DID NOT TAKE THESE
OVER-SHIPMENTS LIGHTLY. THE KOREANS WERE WARNED THAT
THESE OVER-SHIPMENTS COULD HAVE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS
ON OTHER AREAS OF US-KOREAN TRADE RELATIONS AND THAT
THE OVER-SHIPMENTS RAISED DOUBTS AS TO GROC CREDIBILITY
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IN KEEPING COMMITMENTS. KOREAN OFFICIALS RESPONDED THAT
THEY HAD TRIED VERY HARD TO HONOR THEIR COMMITMENT AND HAD
STRICTLY LIMITED EXPORTS TO THE U.S. BUT THAT TRANSSHIPMENTS
FROM CANADA, WHICH THEY COULD NOT CONTROL, ACCOUNTED FOR
THE OVERAGE. (THE KOREANS DID NOT RAISE ISSUE OF NOT
BEING GIVEN TIMELY NOTICE OF LEVEL U.S. IMPORTS FROM
KOREA.)

3. FOLLOW UP MEETING WAS HELD MAY 11 WITH DONG TAE KIM AND SANG YUL KIM, AN OFFICIAL FROM THE KOREAN CANNED GOODS EXPORT ASSOCIATION. DONG TAE, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR RESTRAINT PROGRAM, SAID HE WAS DOING ALL THAT HE POSSIBLY COULD BUT WITHOUT A VISA SYSTEM DID NOT SEE HOW HE COULD ENTIRELY ELIMINATE CANADIAN TRANSSHIPMENTS. HE CLAIMED THAT HE BECAME AWARE OF THE PROBLEM IN APRIL AND ON APRIL 20 STOPPED SHIPMENTS TO CANADA OF 16, 8 AND 4 OZ. CANS, SIZES NOT IN COMMON USAGE IN CANADA. HE ALSO CLAIMED THAT FOLLOWING THE PREVIOUS DAY'S MEETING HE STOPPED SHIPMENT OF 68 OZ. CANS TO CANADA (BOTH U.S. AND CANADA USE THIS SIZE) WITHOUT CONFIRMATION FROM IMPORTERS THAT THEY ARE INTENDED FOR CANADIAN USE. THE GROCERIES HAS ALSO PLACED CERTAIN CANADIAN IMPORTERS ON A BLACKLIST BECAUSE THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THEY HAVE TRANSSHIPPED TO THE U.S. DONG TAE SAID THAT NO MORE SHIPMENTS WILL BE MADE DIRECTLY TO THE U.S. UNTIL JUNE 15.

4. DONG TAE PROVIDED SPIRO WITH A MEMORANDUM GIVING EXPORT FIGURES AND OTHER DATA. THE KOREAN DATA SHOW THAT EXPORTS TO NORTH AMERICA IN APRIL 1977 WERE 3.6 MILLION POUNDS, THE SAME AS IN 1976. HOWEVER, IN 1977, 3.1 MILLION LBS. WENT TO CANADA WHILE IN 1976, 3.1 MILLION LBS. WENT TO THE U.S. MOST KOREAN MUSHROOMS ARE ARRIVING IN VANCOUVER AND ARE APPARENTLY BEING TRANSSHIPPED TO SEATTLE.

5. GIVEN THE SUBSTANTIAL SHIPMENT TO CANADA IN APRIL
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APPARENTLY DESTINED FOR U.S. MARKET, SPIRO STRONGLY RECOMMENDED TO DONG TAE THAT HE WIRE CANADIAN IMPORTERS AND WARN THEM AGAINST TRANSSHIPMENTS TO THE U.S. SPIRO ALSO SAID THAT WE WOULD SPEAK WITH U.S. CUSTOMS TO SEE IF THEY HAD ANY IDEAS ON THE TRANSSHIPMENT PROBLEM. KOREAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAS BEEN ASKED TO EXPLORE PROBLEM WITH STR.

6. COMMENT: SPIRO HAD IMPRESSION THAT DONG TAE KIM WAS DOING HIS BEST TO HONOR KOREAN COMMITMENT BUT THAT KOREAN EXPORTERS AND CANADIAN AND U.S. IMPORTERS WERE INTENTIONALLY CIRCUMVENTING AGREEMENT. DONG TAE IS FULLY AWARE THAT THE CANADIAN PROBLEM WILL NOT BE OVER ON JULY 1 AS GOK HAS AGREED THAT SHIPMENTS FOLLOWING THAT DATE WILL NOT DISRUPT U.S. CANNED MUSHROOM MARKET. IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE A MEETING IN WASHINGTON WITH INTERESTED AGENCIES, U.S. CUSTOMS AND KOREAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS TO FURTHER EXPLORE TRANSSHIPMENT PROBLEM AND POSSIBLE CONTROLS, SAFEGUARDS OR MONITORING THAT COULD CONTRIBUTE TO A SOLUTION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 13-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TAIPEI02794
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770170-0253
Format: TEL
From: TAIPEI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770559/aaaabytv.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0698a494-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 100053
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2525799
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MUSHROOMS
TAGS: BEXP, TW
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0698a494-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009